



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

October 22, 1999

H.R. 2885 **Statistical Efficiency Act of 1999**

*As ordered reported by the House Committee on Government Reform
on September 30, 1999*

H.R. 2885 would designate eight bureaus and offices as statistical data centers: the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the National Center for Education Statistics, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Energy Consumption Division in the Department of Energy, and the Division of Science Resources Studies in the National Science Foundation. In 1999, these agencies received about \$2.1 billion. Subject to certain confidentiality procedures, the bill would allow the centers to share statistical data, eliminate duplicate reporting requirements, and enter into joint projects to improve the quality and lower the cost of statistical programs. In addition, the bill would allow other federal agencies to share data with the eight centers for purely statistical purposes. (In general, under current law, an agency that collects data is not allowed to share the information with another agency.)

H.R. 2885 could lower the government's costs to collect statistical data if it results in the eight centers pooling resources and eliminating duplicate efforts. Although it is uncertain how much agencies would share resources and data under H.R. 2885, based on information from the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), CBO estimates that implementing the bill would reduce information collection costs by up to \$2 million a year. Any such savings would depend on the amounts provided to these agencies in appropriations acts. In addition, by allowing agencies to share and compare data, the bill also could improve the quality of federal statistics, but CBO has no basis for estimating the budgetary impact of such improvements. Finally, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, CBO estimates that the bill would cost OMB less than \$500,000 annually to write regulations and oversee the bill's implementation.

Enacting H.R. 2885 could result in the collection of additional criminal fines, which would affect both governmental receipts and direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. CBO estimates that neither the receipts nor the spending would exceed \$500,000 in

any one year. H.R. 2885 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact is John R. Righter. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.